A Monthly Publication for Alabama Citizen Corps Councils, their Partners and Affiliates

#### June-July 2006

Alabama Citizen Corps is a program of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

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## Hurricane Season Forecasts

Dr. William M. Gray, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus of atmospheric science at Colorado

State University (CSU), and head of the Tropical Meteorology Project at CSU's Department of Atmospheric Sciences. Noted for his forecasts of Atlantic hurricane season activity, Dr. Gray and his team have been issuing seasonal hurricane forecasts since 1984. Using past and current climate and oceanographic information, Gray's predictions contribute to the overall effort in community preparedness. In his April 4, 2006 forecast, Gray writes, "It is only through hindcast skill that one can demonstrate that seasonal forecast skill is possible." He and other scientists believe that there is enough of a track record in "hindcasts" (the opposite of forecasts) to continue basing predictions on these past patterns.

The table below shows Dr. Gray's final adjusted forecast for the 2006 season and demonstrates the consistency with the previous forecast in December. It is a combination of his team's de-



NASA Satellite imagery from Hurricane Katrina.

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#### ATLANTIC BASIN SEASONAL HURRICANE FORECAST FOR 2006

Forecast Parameter and 1950-2000 Climatology (in parentheses)	Issue Date 6 December 2005	Issue Date 4 April 2006
Named Storms (NS) (9.6)	17	17
Named Storm Days (NSD) (49.1)	85	85
Hurricanes (H) (5.9)	9	9
Hurricane Days (HD) (24.5)	45	45
Intense Hurricanes (IH) (2.3)	5	5
Intense Hurricane Days (IHD) (5.0)	13	13
Net Tropical Cyclone Activity (NTC) (100%)	195	195

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rived full 52-year statistical forecast, analog forecast and adjustments for other factors not explicitly contained in either scheme. They foresee another very active Atlantic basin hurricane season. The historical records and the laws of statistics indicate that the probability of seeing another two consecutive hurricane season like 2004-2005 is very low. However, regardless of how active the 2006 hurricane season is, a finite probability always exists that one or more hurricanes may strike along the U.S. coastline or in the Caribbean and do much damage.

For more information on seasonal updates, please check <a href="http://hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu/Forecasts">http://hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu/Forecasts</a> on Wednesday, May 31st, for the first official update of the 2006 hurricane season.

#### A Fourteen-Year-Old Hero From Dora



Chief Edwards, of the City of Dora Fire and Rescue Squad, has made yearly trips to local elementary schools every October, demonstrating how best to protect and fend for yourself in an emergency. Edwards and his crew brought the Smoke Trailer RV to

assist in the fire prevention classes, creating dangerous, smoky situation where elementary school kids could learn how to identify an emergency and how to respond, learning, for instance, the catch phrase: Stop, Drop, and Roll!

As a student at T.S. Boyd Elementary School, Zac Scissom attended the fire prevention classes every year. "I was there every October, so he was exposed to the class several times," related Chief Edwards. Apparently, as a child, Zac took away a priceless lesson.

The last weekend in April, Zac's father was out working on his lawn mower, attempting to get

it to run properly again. Holding a jug of gas in his hand, he attempted to repower the mower by pouring gas into the carburetor, though unsuccessfully as with each attempt, the mower would sputter and die. After a few tries, the lawn mower suddenly backfired, blowing fire out and onto Mr. Scissom's hand, ultimately catching the jug, his hand, and his belly on fire.

In a state of panic, Mr. Scissom went running from the garage out onto the yard. "I just didn't know what I was doing..." he shared in retelling the story. From the garage he heard his son call over and over again, "Daddy, drop and roll! Daddy, drop and roll!" Zac was screaming the lesson he had learned from years of fire prevention with



Zac, with his father, after the accident.

Chief Edwards. "I just shouted what I knew," he explained. And that's exactly what Mr. Scissom did next: he dropped and rolled, putting out all the flames that had ignited on his body. "I was very lucky... Usually, he's not there with me. But for some reason he was there this time," he continues, reflecting, "It would've been a whole lot worse if he hadn't been there."

### Fight Terrorism by Registering on PUSH

PUSH, the *Portal to Uphold a Secure Homeland*, is funded by the US Department of Homeland Security and developed by the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center and the Alabama Department of Homeland Security.

PUSH is a direct link between State/Federal homeland security officials and security personnel. As explained on the website:

Security personnel are in a unique position to observe terrorist incidents. However, it has been found that such incidents often go unreported. Even when they are reported, there is no effective way to "connect the dots" and to put all of the related incidents that may occur in several jurisdictions together.

In line with the mission of Citizen Corps for citizens to embrace the personal responsibility of preparedness, PUSH is yet another way to empower local personnel in the fight against terrorism and the fight for our personal and national security.

Many PUSH participants are in the private sector, but public officials, such as school or postal personnel, are also encouraged to join. Once a report has been made, the PUSH *flash page* immediately informs members of an emergency situation or advisory. This accessible information keeps the channels of communication open and further enhances our security.

PUSH provides a daily update of the latest DHS Daily Open Infrastructure Report, documents on emergency response planning and disaster relief, and a searchable index of over 200 links to terrorism-related websites.

According to an ACJIC representative, "We will add capability to PUSH as it is justified by the number of PUSH users. This will include many more documents and a private messaging system so that PUSH members can easily create groups to communicate with those of similar interests." Join today! Go to the PUSH web site (https://push.alacop.gov/)and click: Obtain Username & Password.

# Can You Put a Price on a Volunteer? The Volunteer Debate

One of the biggest questions for nonprofit organizations is whether or not volunteers are worth investing in. Are volunteers helpful? Do they hinder professional efforts? Will they increase my resources? Will volunteers replace paid staff? Is their training sufficient? The volunteer debate is ongoing among organizations who utilize this necessary resource. However, when wondering about the true value of these generous efforts, one might look at Independent Sector (www.independentsector.org). A leadership forum working to advance common good, Independent Sector has been calculating the approximate value of volunteer time since 1980.



In Alabama, the estimated value of a volunteer hour is \$14.71. This places Alabama right above South Carolina and Louisiana. The Alabama volunteer value has risen \$.73 since 2003 placing the value at more than \$9.50 above

minimum wage. Therefore, it is apparent that nonprofit as well as other organizations will benefit, at least monetarily, from the investment in volunteers, trained or untrained.

For more information and additional resources, please check out <a href="https://www.policevolunteers.org/resources">www.policevolunteers.org/resources</a>.



## Birmingham's Rising-West Residents Rise Above

Alabama native, Taylor Hicks, is the American Idol name in the news today, but it is the relative of former American Idol winner, Ruben Studdard, who is making news in her Alabama community today.

Hattie Williams, grandmother to Studdard, is involved in community improvement projects worthy of national praise. As President of Rising-West Princeton Neighborhood Association in Birmingham she has been instrumental in revitalizing the neighborhood. Williams works closely with the staff at the Rising-West Princeton, Inc., and together they have worked to purchase abandoned and dilapidated lots in order to transform them into beautiful and affordable housing.

Rising-West Princeton, Inc. originated when Reaf Blue (current President of Rising-West Princeton, Inc.) and William Deamues, retired residents of Rising-West Princeton, were looking for ways to improve their community. To begin the housing project, Rising-West Princeton Board Members used their own homes as collateral, borrowing from the bank to start building their community dream houses at prices affordable to residents. After selling the first four homes for as little as \$63,000 (just \$3,000 above cost), it was clear these dedicated community members

aimed to make lasting changes in their community. Such immediate initial success inspired city officials to lend support to the program. Thanks to this additional support, Rising-West Princeton Board Members no longer have to shoulder the entire financial responsibility of running the program. Rising-West Princeton, Inc. is now on the way to completing its 17<sup>th</sup> home. Each home caters to low and middle-income individuals and runs around \$87,000.

In addition to building the physical infrastructure of a neighborhood, Rising-West Princeton, Inc. has also worked to raise public awareness about critical issues faced everyday by residents. Rising-West Princeton resi-



From left, William Deamues, Hattie Williams, and Reaf Blue.

dents are encouraged to participate in classes covering everything from fire safety to burglary prevention. The Rising-West Princeton neighborhood has also been a recent participant in the Weed and Seed Project, a successful program designed to weed out crime and seed community involvement. Williams, along with two other community volunteers, also participated in Community Emergency Response Team training in order to help her neighborhood in times of crisis. Alabama's Neighborhood Watch would like to congratulate these inspirational individuals for their work in transforming their neighborhoods into strong and healthy places to live.

For more information on the Rising-West Princeton, Inc., please contact Mary Robinson at (205) 785-0230.

### **VISTA Disaster Response and Recovery Team**

The Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI) currently has seven AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members serving alongside regular staff in the office. Led by Alison Welty, these VISTA volunteers serve on the Disaster Response and Recovery Team.

The team is working on a variety of projects, including but not limited to, setting up an Interfaith Disaster Network, writing and implementing a ten-year plan to end homelessness, and coordinating volunteers and donations for the state of Alabama.

## VISTA of the Month—Tim Bergman

As a VISTA member with the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives I am providing staff support for the Governor's Statewide Interagency Council on Homelessness. When creating the Council, Governor Riley recognized that in order to effectively work to end homelessness in Alabama there must be collaboration among government agencies, the private



sector, and service provider networks and I am happy to be assisting with this important effort.

My professional background is working in politics and government in Illinois. Shortly after I finished grad school Katrina made landfall and I had the opportunity to volunteer in the Gulf Coast. My experience in Alabama and with the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives has been remarkable and I look forward to working with everyone.



## Tim Bergman Puts CERT Training to Use

A month after CERT training I was able to use what I had learned in fire safety to quell a potentially dangerous situation caused by a smoking cigarette, an oxygen machine and an octogenarian.

After returning home from work I noticed smoke in the hallway that was coming from an elderly man's apartment down the hall. While simultaneously calling 911 I started banging on his door. He eventually comes to the door and reassured me that it was nothing, just his oxygen tank caught on fire and he put it out. Not feeling reassured I got him into the hallway. I checked briefly to see if there was an active fire, not seeing one and wanted to get out of the smoke I went into the hallway. When the firefighters arrived I directed them to the fire and then stepped back as they did their job.

The CERT training allowed for me to recognize that this is a situation that I can be of help and also to understand that once the professionals are doing their job to step back.

#### We want to know what you've been up to.

The Alabama Citizen Corps Council is looking for articles, pictures, updates, lessons learned, tips, useful websites and events for this monthly newsletter. Please send any information on Citizen Corps, CERT, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, or anything else of interest to Citizen Corps Councils to: alison.welty@servealabama.gov. Submissions are due by the 15th of each month to be published in the following month's newsletter, space permitting.

### June and July's Tip of the Month:

#### Floods— Even Shallow Water Can Be Deadly

Floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disasters in terms of human hardship and economic loss. As much as 90 percent of the damage related to all natural disasters (excluding draught) is caused by floods and associated debris flow.

Regardless of how a flood occurs, the rule for being safe is simple: head for higher ground and stay away from floodwater. Even a shallow depth of fast-moving floodwater produces more force than most people imagine. You can protect yourself by being prepared and having time to act. Local radio or television stations or a NOAA Weather Radio are the best sources of information in a flood situation.

#### **3-Day Kit** Checklist

Having a 3-Day Kit ready and packed will help prepare your family in the case of an emergency or evacuation. Keep the following items in a sturdy and easy-to-carry container and make sure it's ready to go at all times during the year:

- □ Copies of important documents in a waterproof container (Photo IDs, proof of residence, insurance, birth certificates, deeds, Social Security Card, etc.)
- □ Non-expired medication, medical contact information, and first aid kit
- Extra car and house keys
- □ Bottled water (1 gallon per person/day) and non-perishable food (i.e. granola or energy bars)
- □ Battery operated radio, flashlight, and extra batteries
- Contact and meeting place information for your household and a small regional map
- □ Small denomination cash and ATM cards
- □ Comfortable shoes, raingear, and blanket
- □ Any special care items

National Preparedness Month (September) will be here before we know it! Just remember it's never too early to start thinking about the kind of projects you would like to launch in your community to help everyone become more prepared for disasters of all kinds.

Send Us Your Feedback!
Have suggestions or ideas for topics? Please send them to Megan Bayha at megan.bayha@servealabama.gov.

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